

# Keen Struggle Assured When Women Golfers Gather at Boston Next Month to Play for National Championship

## NATION BOASTS OF MANY STAR WOMEN GOLFERS

Mrs. Feitner and Miss Hollins Lead Topnotchers in "Met" District.

## ALL EYES FOCUSED ON NATIONAL EVENT.

Although the women's national golf championship is still two months away—it will be held at the comparatively new Belmont Spring Country Club, near Boston, October 2 to 7 inclusive—nearly all of the minor championships are now things of the past, and the women golfers have little to do except to keep on practicing for the big tournament. Important competitions for the women are all too few; most of them have only the championship of their particular section and the national tourney to look forward to each year. It is true that the New Yorkers, Philadelphians and Bostonians also have the Eastern championship and the Griscum cup matches every season, but their sisters in other sections are not quite so lucky. The men have a long series of big tournaments to play in and their game is benefited thereby, and the standard of women's golf in the United States undoubtedly would be higher if there were more match play tournaments to bring the leaders together with greater frequency. Whatever might be the facts are that with the exception of the Western championship, which will be played next month, all of the minor championships were over so long ago that the average follower of the game has almost forgotten who won them, and when the women gather at Belmont Spring they will have trouble in remembering who are titleholders and who are not. It will be almost like the beginning of a new golfing season for the women, but nevertheless what they have done so far probably is at least a fair indication of what they may be expected to do in the supreme test which will create the national champion of 1916.

It does not take a long list to include the names of all the women who may be said to have a chance of winning the title. Good women golfers are few and far between in this country, the lack of first rank players being practically in direct proportion to the lack of the kind of competition which is needed to produce them.

### The Champion May Repeat.

First on the list of favorites must come the national champion, Mrs. Clarence H. Vanderbeck of Philadelphia, and it is only within the last fortnight that it has been known definitely that she could be considered as a contender at all. Illness this spring kept her out of all competition (she even had to let her Eastern title go without attempting a defense), and it was not until it began to look as though she might have to remain out of the national championship too.

Now all those fears have vanished and Mrs. Vanderbeck looms up as a champion who will be hard to beat when she takes up the task of defending the crown she won so long ago at Onwentsia last year. Word came from Philadelphia the other day that she had completely recovered her health and was playing better than ever. This statement was supported in rather convincing fashion by the fact that she played the Aronimink course recently in 81, fine going for a woman on any course, hard or easy. If Mrs. Vanderbeck is playing that well now and has two whole months ahead in which she can devote herself to practice she should be playing great golf when she gets to Belmont. Good golfer as she is, Mrs. Vanderbeck's style is not convincing. It is a little too artificial and has mechanical accuracy without quite enough natural grace. She is a typical example of the type that has been winning the American title year after year, although she really seems a little better golfer than most of her predecessors. Her greatest asset rather than brilliancy, and to her credit be it said that she knows how to use that asset as it should be used.

### Miss Stirling's Style Is Best.

Next on the list of golfers who are likely to be serious contenders for the national title is the Southern champion, Miss Alexa Stirling of Atlanta. If golfing style were the sole factor in selecting the champion of the United States, Miss Stirling would win by acclamation, for as a stylist she is practically a class. She is one of all America's women golfers who call forth from the lips of those who are following women's golf as far back as 1912 the exclamation "Why, she plays as Miss Dodd and Miss Ravenscroft did!" The visit of the two British girls that year was in the nature of a revelation, despite the previous triumph of Miss Dorothy Campbell, now Mrs. Hurd, and since then every one has been looking for an American prototype of Miss Dodd or Miss Ravenscroft, now Mrs. Alan Macbeth and Mrs. Temple Dobell.

To such faithful followers of the game, who prefer a sound style even to victory, believing that the former is sure to bring the latter in its train, the appearance of little Miss Stirling at Nassau in 1914 was like a ray of light in the dark. Despite the fact that she was beaten in the first round, the wise men who watched her play were firm in the belief that her splendid style would place her at the top before many seasons passed.

Last year at Onwentsia she more than lived up to expectations, for she reached the semi-final round and then was beaten by Mrs. Vanderbeck, the ultimate victor, on the twenty-second green, the longest match ever played in the history of the women's national championship.

This year Miss Stirling has done all she has had a chance to do—she has retained her title of Southern champion. The tourney was played at Chattanooga pretty early in May, and was a romp for the defending champion. Miss Stirling admits herself that she didn't have to worry much about winning, and so was able to devote herself between matches to having a good time, and if she had a good time of the kind that week she surely had a good time while on them too.

The Chattanooga course is more than 6,000 yards in length, and she led the field in the qualifying round with an 88. Her first match she won by 7 up and 6 to play, the second by 6 and 5, the semi-final by 8 and 7 and the thirty-six hole final by 6 and 5 again. The only reasonable reason assigned for making her play a thirty-six hole final—even the national championship final—is only eighteen holes—two to give her a chance to play the last five holes of the course, which she had not seen since the qualifying round. Just by way of good measure, Miss Stirling also helped Atlanta win the team prize, was first in the

## NATIONAL GOLF CHAMPION AND SOME OF THE WOMEN WHO ARE AFTER HER TITLE.



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